

## 1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

2 INTRODUCED BY T. FACEY

3

4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF  
5 MONTANA STATING THAT GRAY WOLVES IN MONTANA ARE BEST MANAGED ACCORDING TO A STATE  
6 PLAN AND THAT WORKING WITH WYOMING AND IDAHO IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO ENSURING  
7 THAT THE GRAY WOLF IS REMOVED FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST.

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9 WHEREAS, by any credible standard, gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountain distinct population  
10 segment are biologically recovered; and

11 WHEREAS, by the end of 2002, the gray wolf population in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming met the United  
12 States Fish and Wildlife Service's threshold recovery goal of 30 breeding pairs and at least 300 wolves for 3  
13 consecutive years in a metapopulation in the Northern Rocky Mountains; and

14 WHEREAS, in 2009, there were at least 524 wolves in Montana and at least 1,706 wolves in the tristate  
15 area of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming with an estimated 115 breeding pairs distributed among the three recovery  
16 zones, Yellowstone, Central Idaho, and Northwest; and

17 WHEREAS, Montana's constitution, statutes, and administrative rules require the state to continue to  
18 manage wolves for their long-term viability; and

19 WHEREAS, it is well past time to transition from Montana managing this biologically recovered population  
20 of wolves under the federal Endangered Species Act to Montana managing this biologically recovered species  
21 under state law; and

22 WHEREAS, managing wolves as a resident native species according to Montana law allows Montana's  
23 wolf program to better meet the needs of Montana citizens and visitors; and

24 WHEREAS, Montana has demonstrated its commitment and ability to manage gray wolves both socially  
25 and biologically, providing for a viable and connected wolf population while through adaptive management  
26 reducing wolf impacts on livestock and on ungulates, including elk and deer; and

27 WHEREAS, the Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan of 2003 sets out an adaptive  
28 management framework based on wolf biology that provides the flexibility necessary to adapt to the changes in  
29 wolf population status quickly and to reduce wolf impacts on livestock and ungulates through the actions of the  
30 Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission; and

1           WHEREAS, Montana's Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan is largely based on the work of  
2 the 12-member Montana Wolf Advisory Council, a diverse, independent, bipartisan stakeholder group, whose  
3 work created the foundation and guiding principles of the Montana Gray Wolf Conservation and Management  
4 Plan; and

5           WHEREAS, Montana's Gray Wolf Conservation and Management Plan addresses wolf biology, human  
6 safety, livestock interactions, funding, compensation for livestock depredations, wildlife monitoring, and predator  
7 prey relationships; and

8           WHEREAS, the history of past efforts to delist the gray wolf demonstrates that responsible state  
9 management is one key to delisting of the gray wolf; and

10           WHEREAS, the federal district court judge in Montana allowed hunting seasons in Montana and Idaho  
11 to proceed in the fall and winter of 2009-2010 based on the strength of Montana's management plan; and

12           WHEREAS, the surest path to state management is through a delisting of the gray wolf population by  
13 either a delisting rule adopted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or by a legislative act of the United  
14 States Congress delisting wolves; and

15           WHEREAS, the key to delisting the gray wolf is for Montana to stay the course with its present wolf  
16 management plan, statutes, and regulations and to encourage and lead Wyoming and Idaho in making a similar  
17 commitment.

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19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
20 STATE OF MONTANA:

21           That the 62nd Legislature:

22           (1) supports the delisting of the Northern Rocky Mountain distinct population segment of the gray wolf  
23 under the federal Endangered Species Act and further supports the transfer of the management of gray wolves  
24 in Montana to the state's Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission;

25           (2) continues to support the management of gray wolves in Montana under the Montana Gray Wolf  
26 Conservation and Management Plan of 2003, which was developed by a diverse, independent, bipartisan  
27 stakeholder wolf advisory council, and under Montana's statutes and administrative rules that authorize and  
28 govern wolf management;

29           (3) recognizes that the only practical and viable option for state management of gray wolves is either:

30           (a) a delisting rule adopted by the United States Department of the Interior that will successfully

1 withstand a legal challenge in federal court; or

2 (b) an act of the United States Congress that delists the Northern Rocky Mountain distinct population  
3 segment;

4 (4) recognizes that the two options for delisting and state management are possible only if Montana  
5 continues to adhere to its state plan, statutory framework, and administrative rules for managing wolves;

6 (5) commits to working with Wyoming and Idaho and directs the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife,  
7 and Parks and the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Commission to continue to work with and to urge Wyoming  
8 and Idaho to do everything necessary to remove all potential barriers to delisting of the wolf by rule or by  
9 Congress; and

10 (6) recognizes that if Montana abandons its present commitment to managing gray wolves, the gray wolf  
11 will not be delisted and Montana will not realize state management in the foreseeable future.

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